



Plant Chat

A Quarterly Publication from the Bismarck Plant Materials Center
to the NRCS Field Offices in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota

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<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

Two Native Shrub Species Available for Field Planting Evaluation

American black currant and roundleaf (fireberry) hawthorn are available for field planting evaluation for 2006 in wildlife or windbreak plantings. Twenty-five plants will be provided for testing at six sites in each of the three states. The American black currant source is from Big Sioux Nursery at Watertown, SD. We have had it for two years in various off-center evaluation plantings where it has performed well with vigorous growth and good fall color. The roundleaf hawthorn is a selection of five accessions from South



Two-year old plants at the Becker off-center evaluation planting cooperative with the field office at Elk River, MN.



Showy red fruit on the roundleaf hawthorn ripens in September and persists into the winter.

Dakota which were evaluated for many years by the PMC in a large nursery. Further information is available for both species in the PLANTS database including a plant guide for the fireberry hawthorn (<http://plants.usda.gov>). Requests for field planting material needs to be submitted on an ECS-9, which is available at <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>. Select PM Intranet under Quick Access on the left, choose Forms, and ECS-9. Dwight Tober, Plant Materials Specialist

Assembling the Big Three

Thanks to everyone involved in site location and collection of Indiangrass, sand bluestem, and prairie sandreed for the PMC the past few years. Your labors have grown into three valuable and interesting evaluation blocks from which the PMC hopes to make selections and new releases.

Prairie sandreed is valuable for controlling erosion on sandy sites. Greenhouse propagated seedlings got off to a very slow start in the field in 2004. In 2005, however, they picked up momentum. Differences in lateral growth, seed production, and leaf rust for each of the plants were noted this year. As disease is a major problem in prairie sandreed, it was interesting to see some plants dead and dying and others clean and thriving. Your collection is valuable to us, dead or alive!

Sand bluestem is another erosion control species for sandy sites. Seedlings were propagated in the greenhouse and planted to an evaluation block in 2005. As seed production is often poor in this species, it was exciting to see seed heads produced this first year. As the two species are very similar, it is of no surprise that some collections were big bluestem rather than sand bluestem. Even these prove to be a valuable lesson in identification.

Indiangrass, planted from plantlets in 2005 are displaying a diversity of color, leaf size and plant stature. The attractive appearance of this species makes it a great landscaping candidate. A similar planting of this material can be found at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum at Chanhassen.

Thanks again for the collections!

Nancy Jensen, Agronomist

Time to Order Cordgrass Rhizomes

Rhizomes of Red River prairie cordgrass (*Spartina pectinata*) can be ordered from some local conservation nurseries. If you have an ongoing project where prairie cordgrass would be suited, consider ordering some plants now. The PMC has had success with both fall and spring plantings of rhizomes. For additional information, a plant guide is available from the PMC. This plant guide information can also be obtained on the PLANTS website (<http://plants.usda.gov>).

Mike Knudson, Forester



J-hook rhizome pieces can be planted using a tree planter or by hand.



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Plant Materials Available for North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota - 2006

I. Field Plantings

Plant Material	Purpose	Sites Needed	Plants per site	Preferred MLRA
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SHRUBS AND TREES

Currant, American Black 9082687	Wildlife (WLDF) Windbreak, Multi-row (WBMR)	six in each state	25 plants	statewide (ND, SD, MN)
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American black currant (*Ribes americanum*) is a native, small shrub which grows naturally in moist, shaded flood plains and occasionally open areas. The origin of this accession is northeast South Dakota along the Big Sioux River. It was planted in 2004 in off-center field plantings in the three-state area and performed well. Height in two years averaged 3-4 feet. Maximum height is expected to be around 6 feet. Growth may be erect or spreading. Flowers are greenish-yellow with creamy white petals. Berries formed in late summer are red-purple to nearly black when mature. The edible fruits are highly sought after by birds and animals. Fall color is yellow/gold with some leaves showing red/purple. Initial evaluations indicate this species of currant is not defoliated by leafspot in mid-summer, typical of golden currant. Site preference is for better soils with good weed control; however, some drier sites are desired to test drought tolerance. Plant spacing would be as specified by individual state standards in the FOTG for small shrubs. Plants are 1-year old bareroot seedlings. Size is approximately 12" @ 6/32" caliber. Written documentation of plant performance is requested annually for 5 years. Data forms will be provided.

Hawthorn, Roundleaf or Fireberry 9076678	Wildlife (WLDF) Windbreak, Multi-row (WBMR)	six in each state	25 plants	statewide (ND, SD, MN)
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Roundleaf or fireberry hawthorn (*Crataegus chrysocarpa*) is a native, large shrub or small tree which grows naturally along stream banks, wetlands, open hillsides, and woody draws. The origin is from a seed composite of 5 selected accessions from Butte, Marshall, Day, Hamlin, and Harding counties in South Dakota. Individual plants may grow up to 20 feet. It grows best in well drained loamy soils. Plants are tap rooted and will tolerate wet to droughty soils once established. Growth rate is slow. It is tolerant to wind and atmospheric pollution. Clustered flowers have white petals in early June. Showy, red fruit forms in September and usually persists into winter. Older plants have stout thorns 2 to 3 inches long. Plants are often heavily browsed by deer and protection should be considered in areas with high deer populations. Plant spacing would be as specified by individual states' FOTG. Plants are 2-year old bareroot seedlings that have been root pruned. Size is approximately 12" @ 6/32" caliber. Written documentation of plant performance is requested for 5 years. Data forms will be provided.

- Submit your plant materials requests through the area plant materials contact person on a form ECS-9 which can be found with fillable format on the Plant Materials Program homepage <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>. (Select PM Intranet under Quick Access on the left, and then choose Forms, and ECS-9) Requests will be considered during the State Plant Materials Committee meeting.

II. Foundation Seed for Certified Seed Production - Year 2006

VARIETY	COMMON NAME
Native - Grasses	
Badlands ecotype	little bluestem
Itasca germplasm	little bluestem
Bad River ecotype	blue grama
Bismarck ecotype	buffalograss (vegetative plugs)
Bison	big bluestem
Bonilla	big bluestem
Dacotah	switchgrass
Forestburg	switchgrass
Mandan	Canada wildrye
Pierre	sideoats grama
Red River germplasm	prairie cordgrass
Rodan	western wheatgrass
Tomahawk	Indiangrass
Lodorm	green needlegrass
Native - Forbs/Legumes	
Bismarck germplasm	purple prairieclover
Bismarck germplasm	stiff sunflower
Medicine Creek germplasm	Maximilian sunflower
Bismarck germplasm	narrow-leaved purple coneflower
Introduced - Grasses	
Mankota	Russian wildrye
Manska	pubescent/intermediate wheatgrass
Reliant	pubescent/intermediate wheatgrass
Nordan	crested wheatgrass

- All foundation seed is sold through the NDSU Foundation Seedstocks Program and payment must be received before the seed is shipped. Price adjustments are made in January of each year.
- ECS-9s are no longer required for foundation seed requests. Seed growers or field office personnel should contact the Plant Materials Specialist directly.

III. Special Plantings - Year 2006

Small amounts of various seeds and plants will be provided for special purposes such as demonstration, promotion, and research. No data collection is required. A completed ECS-9 form is preferred whenever possible. Requests for special plantings should be made through the plant materials contact person, the Plant Materials Specialist, or Plant Materials Center staff. Call for species/variety availability. **It would be helpful to have your special planting order confirmed prior to March 1, 2006.**

Plant Material	Purpose	Plants or PLS# Available	Maximum per site	Preferred MLRA
GRASSES				
Sweetgrass 9063128	Culturally Significant (CUSI)	Per Committee recommendation	10 plants	statewide
FORBS				
White Sage 9082748	Culturally Significant (CUSI)	Per Committee recommendation	10 plants	statewide

Sweetgrass (*Hierochloe odorata*) is an early cool-season grass that is characteristic of wet, sandy soil near riverbanks and lakeshores. Uses of sweetgrass are numerous. The source of sweetgrass's aroma, which smells like vanilla, is called coumarin. This plant compound has been used for hundreds of years as a plant extract for both fragrance and medicinal use. Native American cultures burn braided sweetgrass twists in traditional ceremonies, using the sweet scented smoke as a purifying incense. This accession of sweetgrass was originally collected along the Missouri River near Bismarck, ND. Plants should be spaced 1 to 3 feet apart. Sweetgrass spreads rapidly by underground rhizomes. Successful plantings may be used as propagation beds after establishment. Cooperators are limited to 10 plants each. Plants are shipped in special round containers 1 1/2-inches in diameter and 8 inches deep. After establishment, plants increase rapidly if weeds are controlled. It is not unusual for 10 plants to increase to hundreds of plants the second year, and thousands of plants the third year.

White sage (*Artemisia ludoviciana*) is a herbaceous, silver-white fuzzy rhizomatous forb with 10 to 30 inch leafy stems branching upward. Numerous tiny, gray, flower heads are produced in August to September. Growth form is quite variable depending on site and climatic conditions. It is drought tolerant and likes sandy soil, but persists on a variety of sites. "Man Sage" as it is called by the Cheyenne, is an important ceremonial plant and was used medicinally for various ailments by Native Americans. It has a strong sage aroma. This source is a vegetative composite of plants collected on or near five reservations in the three-state area. Plants should be spaced 1 to 3 feet apart on a prepared garden-like site. White sage spreads aggressively from rhizomes beginning the second year if weeds are controlled. Successful plantings may be used as propagation beds after establishment. Cooperators are limited to 10 plants each. Plants will be shipped in small pots approximately 2 1/2-inches square 3 inches deep.